

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Health opening medical needs shelters

The Alabama Department of Public Health, in conjunction with the Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Human Resources, announces that in anticipation of the arrival of Hurricane Dennis, a limited number of medical needs shelters will be opened for individuals with certain medical conditions. Public Health has activated 375 personnel to support community shelters and medical needs shelter. Currently, six medical needs shelters will be opening in the state.

Medical needs shelters should only be utilized as a last resort by those persons who live at home with stable medical conditions that require the ongoing assistance of an at-home care provider and who need to relocate because of the storm and who do not have an alternative location and source of care. If possible, such persons should seek shelter at the home of a family member or friend.

Persons seeking shelter in a medical needs shelter **MUST** be accompanied by one of their usual care providers and bring enough medications, other treatments, supplies and equipment to serve their needs for up to 72 hours.

Examples of persons who may qualify for a medical needs shelter include persons who need assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs) and have conditions and/or require equipment or treatment such as:

- *Portable ventilators
- *Intravenous therapy
- *Oxygen, nebulizer, or sleep apnea therapy that has been stable/maintained at home for 30 or more days.
- *Wheel-chair-bound patients
- *Frequently incontinent persons (urinary/bowel)
- *Diabetics who require assistance in their insulin medication
- *Simple-dressing changes of those requiring assistance with ADLs
- *Peritoneal dialysis, if the person self-administers or receives family assistance without complications requiring assistance with ADLs
- *Mild dementia without abusive or wandering behavior
- *Mental illness/mental retardation with non-agitated behavior
- *Ostomy patients
- *Foley/supra-pubic catheter patients

ADLs include activities such as bathing, dressing, eating, toileting, transfers and ambulation .

Persons with more severe conditions, e.g., those on non-portable ventilators or with an unstable medical condition, should seek shelter or care at a hospital or other appropriate

institution. Persons with stable, underlying medical conditions that do not require the assistance of a care provider should seek shelter in mass care shelters.

Medical needs shelters will be opened Saturday, July 9, 2005, at the following locations:

- *Birmingham--Boutwell Auditorium at 7 a.m.

- *Montgomery--Fire Department on Ray Thorington Road at 10 a.m.

- *Dothan--First Baptist Church at 10 a.m.

- *Prattville--124 South Memorial Drive (adjacent to Baptist Hospital) at 12 p.m.

- *Mobile--Baker High School at 12 p.m.

- *Greenville--Greenville High School 7 p.m.

Additional sites may be named later.